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AUTHOR Shorr, David; Wallace, Randall; Gann, Cory
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ABSTRACT

While research on prosocial behavior has dramatically increased during the last 20 years, there are few studies examining the role of self-evaluative emotions such as pride and guilt as consequences of and motivations for helping others. This study examined how children attribute pride and guilt for actions germane to the moral or competence domain. Participating were 95 five- to nine-year-olds from a public and a Catholic parochial school. The children were individually presented a story in which a protagonist experienced two successes, one in a moral domain and the other in a competence domain, or two failures. A foil event was presented that was congruent with an emotion opposite the one appropriate for the purposeful successes/failures. Children were asked how the protagonist felt about himself/herself and what made the protagonist feel that way. Loglinear analyses were performed with the following factors: protagonist outcome (success versus failure), child age (below versus above 7 years), and school (public versus parochial). Dependent variables were appropriate emotional identification and moral domain identification. The findings indicated that older children were more likely than younger ones to identify the appropriate emotion and identify the moral domain. The appropriate emotion was more likely to be identified following the protagonist's failures versus successes. The moral domain was more likely to be identified following the protagonist's failures than successes. Parochial school children tended to perform at a more sophisticated level in identifying an emotion appropriate for failure in a moral domain, and less sophisticated in identifying emotion appropriate for success in a moral domain. (KB)

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Children's identification of self-reflective emotions as likely responses to moral and competence domain successes and failures

David Shorr
Central Washington University

Randall Wallace
St. Patrick School

Cory Gann
Central Washington University

David Shorr

A poster session presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (1999, April), Albuquerque, NM.

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David Shorr, Randall Wallace and Cory Gann

The research described here was undertaken as part of an effort to further understand how children view self-evaluative emotions. The specific emotions studied were pride and guilt. Both emotions are defined respectively as positive and negative states resulting from the consideration of one's own specific behavior relative to internalized standards for such behavior (see, e.g., Lewis, 1995). In particular, this study was conducted to ascertain differences in children's attribution of pride and guilt for actions germane to moral or competence domains. Previous research and speculation (e.g., Harter & Whitesell, 1989; Stipek, Recchia, & McClintic, 1992) suggests that children under eight years of age tend to perceive pride as resulting from personal, competence domain successes (e.g., an "A" grade on a test) and guilt as resulting from personal, moral domain failures (e.g., stealing). That is, the two contrasting self-evaluative emotions do not appear to apply to the same behavioral domains for young children. The moral domain behavior targeted in the present research was that of helping vs. not helping another. While research on prosocial behavior has dramatically increased during the last two decades, studies specifically targeting the role of self-evaluative emotions as both consequences of and motivations for acts of helping others are sparse (see, however, Shorr, 1993; Shorr & McClelland, 1998). It is hoped that the results of the proposed research will provide a better understanding of how such emotions are viewed by children of varying ages.

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Procedure

Ninety-nine 5- to 9-year-olds from a public (n = 51) and a Catholic parochial (n = 48) school were individually presented a story in which a protagonist experienced two successes, one in a moral domain (intentionally helping a needy child) and one in a competence domain (aptly performing an athletic task), or two failures (intentionally not helping and inapt performance). Line drawings depicting the sequence of events in the story were provided. The sequences of the success/failure events were randomly determined for each child and a foil event was present. This foil, a fortuitous event, was congruent with an emotion opposite that appropriate for the purposeful successes/failures (see Tables 1 & 2 for example stories). The protagonist in each story was the same gender as the child. The key questions asked each child following a story were, "How do you think [protagonist] was feeling about ***himself/herself***?" and "What was it that made [protagonist] feel this way?" Responses to the former were scored as identifying or not identifying the appropriate emotion for the protagonist ("appropriate emotion identification"). A second dependent variable required that a child both identify the appropriate emotion and its cause as the moral domain behavior ("moral domain identification").

Hypotheses

Obvious hypotheses were that appropriate emotion identification and moral domain identification would increase with age. A third hypothesis was that children would more readily make appropriate emotion identifications following a protagonist's failures than following a protagonist's successes. This hypothesis was partly based on a belief that young children internalize admonishment for specific failures more so than praise for specific successes. This follows from the authors' belief that adult criticism of children tends to be more event targeted

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than does praise (e.g., "You should have cleaned your room this morning" vs. "you are a good helper."). A fourth hypothesis was that moral domain identifications would more readily occur for stories involving failures than those involving successes. This hypothesis was partly derived from Harter and Whitesell's (1989) research in which they reported a trend for children to provide moral transgressions as examples of "shame" inducing events while providing personal competence demonstrations as examples of "pride" inducing events (also see discussion by Stipek, Recchia, & McClintic, 1992). The inclusion of both public and parochial school students allowed for a comparison of children who had likely experienced subtle but pervasive differences in the socialization of self-reflective emotions, particularly in regards to moral behavior. Tentative fifth and sixth hypotheses were that the parochial school children would more readily make appropriate emotion identifications and moral domain identifications.

Results an Discussion

After completing reliability (perfect agreement between two scorers for 16 protocols) and other preliminary analyses, two Loglinear analyses were performed. Factors in both were Protagonist's Outcomes (successes vs. failures), Child's Age (below vs. above 7; 0 years, based on median split), and School (public vs. parochial). The dependent variables were appropriate emotion identification and moral domain identification.

The two analyses provided significant (χ^2 ps < .05) or marginally significant (χ^2 ps < .10) confirmation for all but the hypotheses regarding parochial and public school differences (see Table 3). However, the Protagonist's Outcomes x School interaction was marginally significant for appropriate emotion identification, Loglinear $\chi^2(1, N = 99) = 3.67$, $p < .10$, and highly significant for moral domain identification, Loglinear $\chi^2(1, N = 99) = 7.18$, $p < .01$. These

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effects were due to the predictions made in the third and fourth hypotheses occurring to a greater extent for (appropriate emotion identification) or exclusively in (moral domain identification) the parochial school children (see Table 4). No other effect in the Loglinear analyses approached statistical significance (χ^2 ps $\geq$ .40).

The interaction effects noted above suggest that the parochial school children tended to perform at a more sophisticated level in identifying an emotion appropriate for a failure in a moral domain (i.e., guilt) while performing at a less sophisticated level in identifying an emotion appropriate for success in a moral domain (i.e., pride). This unanticipated finding should at most be an impetus for further, confirming research. That is to say, at this time the authors are hesitant to suggest any of a number of explanations for the finding.

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Table 1

Example Event Successes Story

Story	Description
Jane was on her way to the park to see if she could do a gymnastic trick, a cartwheel, that she had been practicing and had seen other children do. She was in a hurry because she also wanted to watch her favorite television show later. When Jane finally got to the park she did the cartwheel perfectly.[1] She then began to hurry home. On the way home Jane saw a young child who needed help carrying a broken wagon. Although Jane was in a hurry, she stopped and helped the young child.[1] Jane then started home again. On the way she tripped over a rock and scrapped her knee.[2] Later on she was just sitting and thinking about herself and her day.	Story Type: Female (as opposed to Male) **Protagonist Experiencing Event Successes** (as opposed to Failures). [1]Sequence of these two events randomly determined for each child. [2]In "Event Failures" stories protagonist fortuitously finds a lost jacket.

Subsequent Questions:

1) How do you think Jane was feeling about herself *(i.e., reflexive pronoun said with emphasis)*?

2) What was it that made Jane feel this way?

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Table 2

Example Event Failures Story

SStory	Description
Jim was on his way to the ppark to see if he could do a gymnastic trick, a cartwheeel, that he had been practicing and had seen other childrenn do. He was in a hurry because he also wanted to vwatch his favorite television show later. On the way to tthe park Jim saw a young child who needed help carryying a broken wagon. Because Jim was in a hurryy, he didn't stop to help the young child.[1] Jim just kept l hurrying to the park. When Jim finally got to the park hhe didn't the cartwheel very well.[1] He then began to hurrry home. On the way he found his favorite jacket thaat he had lost.[2] Later on he was just sitting and thinkingg about himself and his day.	Story Type: Male (as opposed to Female) **Protagonist Experiencing Event Failures** (as opposed to Successes). [1]Sequence of these two events randomly determined for each child. [2]In "Event Successes" stories protagonist accidentally trips over a rock and scraps a knee.

Subsequent Questions:

1) How do you think JJim was feeling about himself *(i.e., reflexive pronoun said with emphasis)*?

2) What was it that maade Jim feel this way?

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Table 3

Confirmed/Marginally Confirmed Hypotheses

(also see Results and Discussion section)

Hypothesis	Proportion of Children Making	
	Appropriate Emotion Identification	
1. Older children appropriate emotion identification > younger Children ($\chi^2(1, N = 99) = 3.09, p < .10$)	Younger Children	.70
	Older Children	.49
	Moral Domain Identification	
2. Older children moral domain identification > younger Children ($\chi^2(1, N = 99) = 5.85, p < .05$)	Younger Children	.58
	Older Children	.33
	Appropriate Emotion Identification	
3. Appropriate emotion identification following protagonist's failures > following protagonist successes ($\chi^2(1, N = 99) = 8.93, p < .01$)	Fol. Prot. Failures	.76
	Fol. Prot. Successes	.44
	Moral Domain Identification	
4. Moral domain identification following protagonist's failures > following protagonist's successes ($\chi^2(1, N = 99) = 2.84, p < .10$)	Fol. Prot. Failures	.55
	Fol. Prot. Successes	.36

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Table 4

Proportion of Children Making Appropriate Emotion and Moral Domain Identifications by Protagonist's Outcome and School

(also see Results and Discussion section)

	School			
	Public		Parochial	
Protagonist's Outcome	Appropriate Emotion Identification	Moral Domain Identification	Appropriate Emotion Identification	Moral Domain Identification
Successes	.58	.46	.31	.27
Failures	.70	.41	.82	.73

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